



[Home](#) › [Articles](#) › Insights into hours worked, July 2020

Insights into hours worked, July 2020

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Source: [Labour Force, Australia, July 2020](#)

On this page

[Hours worked ranges](#)

[Flows between hours worked categories from June to July](#)

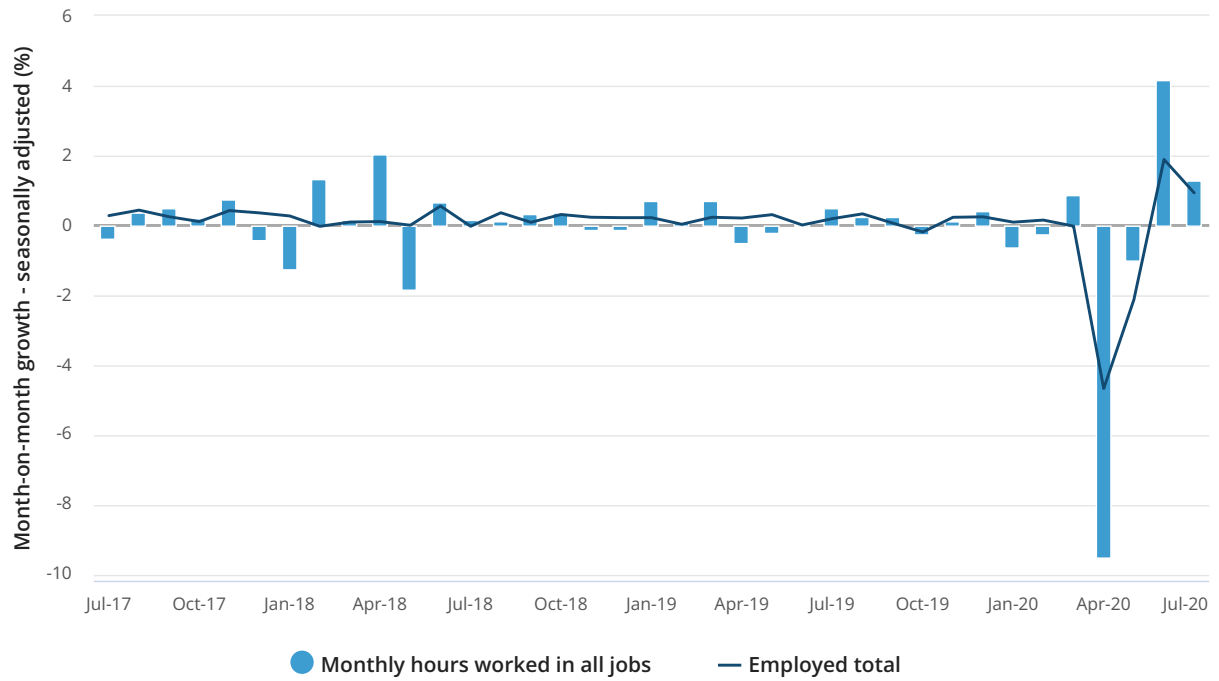
[Underemployment and reduced hours](#)

Hours worked fell by 9.5% between March and April in seasonally adjusted terms, which was double the decrease in employed people (4.7%). After this large fall in April, the decline in hours worked slowed considerably into May, with hours worked decreasing by a further 1.0%. Between May and June, hours worked began to recover, increasing by 4.2%, alongside a 1.9% increase in employment. In July, hours worked increased by another 1.3%.

Since the low point in May, total hours worked has increased by 88 million hours, recovering almost half (47%) of the 186 million decrease between March and May. However, hours worked in July were still 5.5% lower than March.

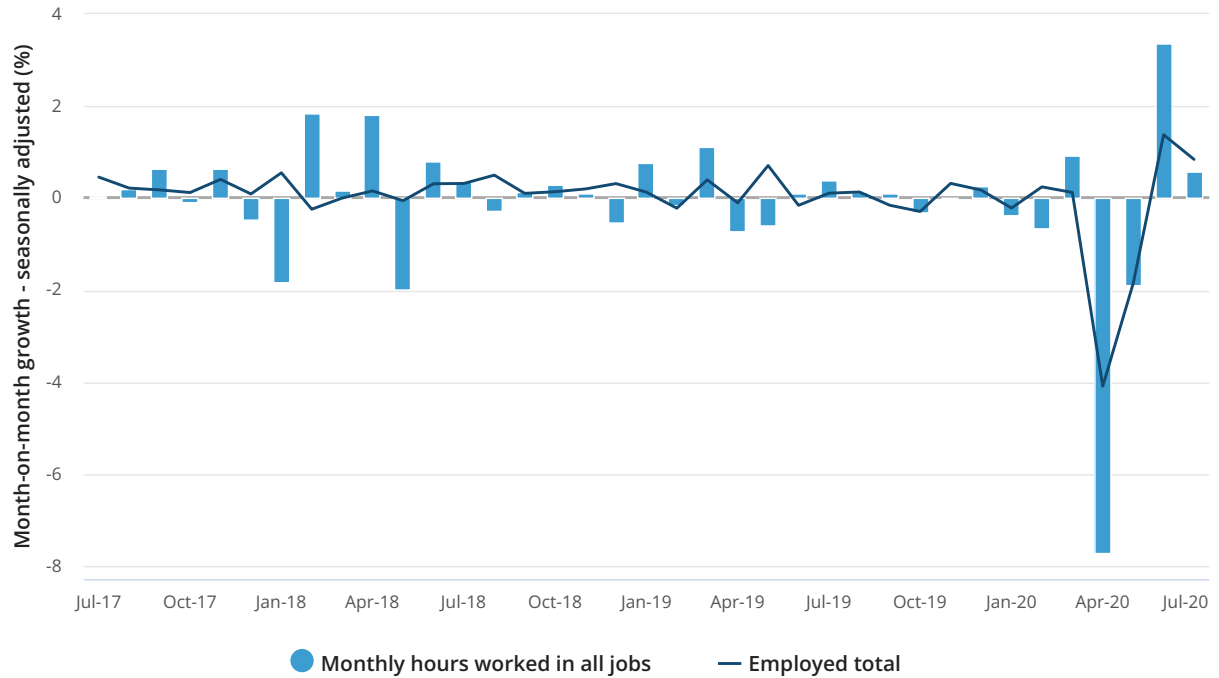
Charts 1, 2 and 3 show the monthly changes in seasonally adjusted hours worked and employment for all people, men and women. Both male and female hours increased between June and July, following the large increases between May and June. Hours worked for women continued to show stronger growth, following the much larger fall in female hours early in the COVID-19 period.

Chart 1: Change in employment and hours worked



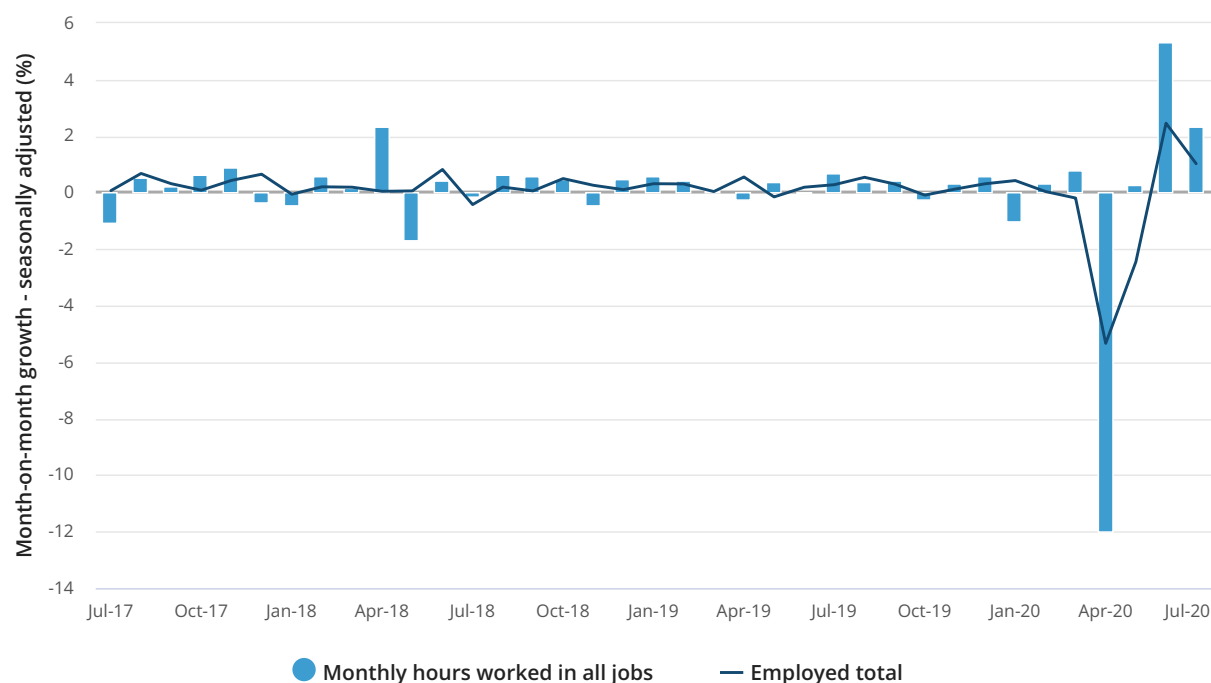
Source: Labour Force, Australia, Tables 1 and 19

Chart 2: Change in employment and hours worked, Males



Source: Labour Force, Australia, Tables 1 and 19

Chart 3: Change in employment and hours worked, Females



Source: Labour Force, Australia, Tables 1 and 19

Hours worked ranges

It is also illuminating to examine the number of people working within various hours ranges. Table 1 and Table 2 show the distribution of employed men and women across the hours worked categories in July, compared to April, May and June, and 2018 and 2019 (to control for seasonality).

Table 1: Distribution of hours worked, Males, Original

	0 hrs	1-19 hrs	20-34 hrs	35-44 hrs	45-59 hrs	60+ hrs
2018						
Apr-18	7.7%	10.6%	25.8%	32.1%	16.0%	7.8%
May-18	5.1%	9.9%	15.5%	40.1%	20.0%	9.4%

	0 hrs	1-19 hrs	20-34 hrs	35-44 hrs	45-59 hrs	60+ hrs
Jun-18	5.5%	9.7%	21.0%	36.6%	18.6%	8.5%
Jul-18	7.8%	9.1%	14.6%	40.1%	19.5%	9.0%
2019						
Apr-19	5.7%	9.9%	15.5%	40.5%	19.5%	8.8%
May-19	5.5%	10.4%	15.5%	40.6%	19.3%	8.8%
Jun-19	5.8%	10.5%	20.9%	37.7%	17.0%	8.2%
Jul-19	7.9%	9.6%	14.6%	40.9%	18.7%	8.2%
2020						
Apr-20	11.6%	10.4%	21.8%	34.9%	14.7%	6.7%
May-20	6.8%	11.2%	17.6%	39.9%	16.8%	7.8%
Jun-20	5.5%	11.0%	22.2%	38.7%	15.4%	7.1%
Jul-20	7.0%	10.9%	17.6%	40.5%	16.8%	7.1%

Source: Labour Force, Detailed, Table 9

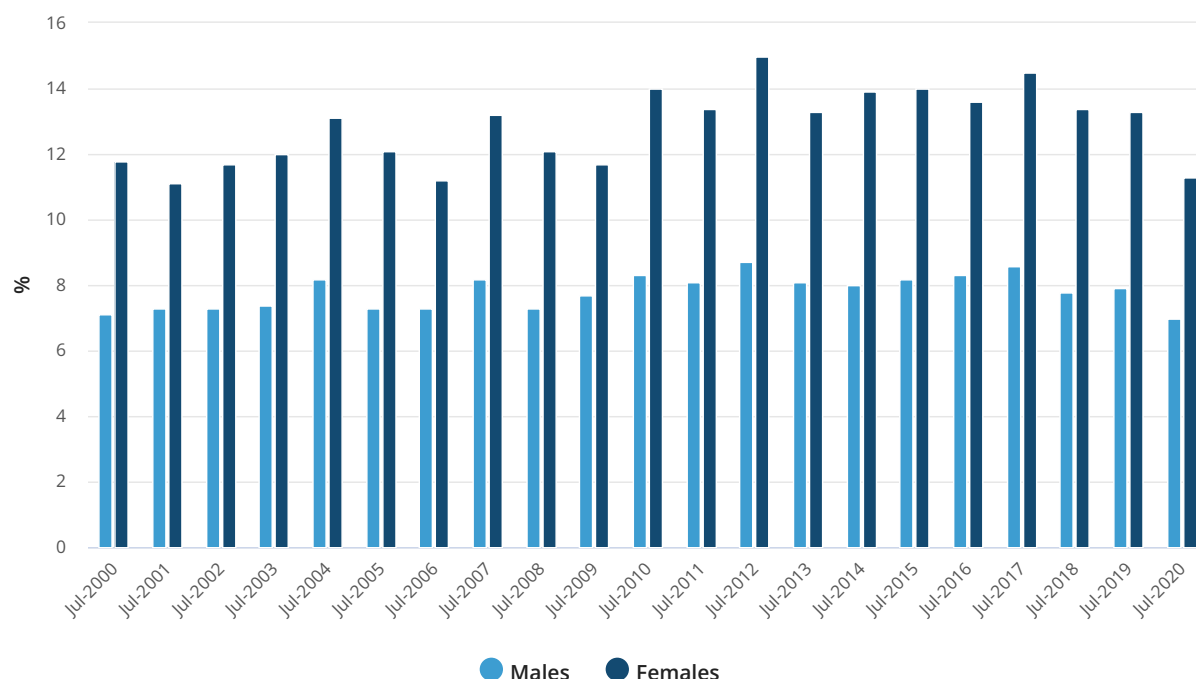
Table 2: Distribution of hours worked, Females, Original

	0 hrs	1-19 hrs	20-34 hrs	35-44 hrs	45-59 hrs	60+ hrs
2018						
Apr-18	11.5%	21.8%	33.9%	23.6%	7.0%	2.3%
May-18	6.6%	20.8%	29.3%	31.4%	9.0%	2.9%
Jun-18	6.9%	21.3%	32.3%	28.5%	8.1%	2.8%
Jul-18	13.4%	18.5%	26.5%	31.1%	8.0%	2.6%
2019						
Apr-19	8.6%	19.5%	28.9%	32.1%	8.1%	2.7%
May-19	6.8%	20.0%	29.2%	32.3%	9.0%	2.6%
Jun-19	7.4%	20.3%	32.1%	29.7%	7.8%	2.8%
Jul-19	13.3%	17.6%	26.4%	31.9%	8.2%	2.5%
2020						
Apr-20	18.6%	18.5%	28.3%	25.4%	7.0%	2.1%
May-20	9.5%	20.6%	28.7%	30.8%	7.8%	2.6%
Jun-20	7.3%	20.7%	32.9%	29.1%	7.8%	2.2%
Jul-20	11.3%	19.5%	28.1%	31.4%	7.3%	2.4%

Source: Labour Force, Detailed, Table 9

Chart 4 shows that the proportions of employed men and women who worked zero hours were slightly lower in July 2020 than in July of recent years, in contrast to the record highs recorded in April and May 2020 (relative to April and May in previous years).

Chart 4: Proportion of employed working zero hours, Original



Source: Labour Force, Detailed, Table 9

Flows between hours worked categories from June to July

Table 3 shows the proportion of people in each of the hours worked categories in July by their hours worked in June.

Of the employed people who worked zero hours in July, over 22% (around 250,000 people) had also worked zero hours in June - indicating that they have been paid for at least some of the past 4 weeks (otherwise they would no longer be classified as employed). This is considerably lower than the 40% recorded between May and June, and 45% recorded between April and May.

Just over 9% (around 100,000 people) of the employed people who worked zero hours in July were not employed in June (again, indicating that they received some pay despite not working any hours). This was also lower than in previous months (16% in June, and 14% in May).

There were also around 120,000 people who moved from working zero hours in June to being not employed in July. This was less than the flow between May and June (150,000) and between April and May (450,000).

Table 3: Flows between hours worked categories from June to July, Original

July								
	0 hours	1-19 hours	20-34 hours	35-44 hours	45-59 hours	60+ hours	Not employed*	
	0 hours	22.5	6.3	3.9	2.7	2.3	2.7	1.5
	1-19 hours	15.2	56.7	14.7	3.1	2.5	2.5	1.8
	20-34 hours	20.4	16.1	56.6	21.9	7.8	4.3	0.9
June	35-44 hours	22.2	5.9	17.2	61.9	29.4	9.6	0.7
	45-59 hours	8.0	2.5	3.8	7.4	47.8	24.2	0.2
	60+ hours	2.5	0.5	0.8	1.0	8.9	55.2	0.0
	Not employed*	9.1	12.1	3.1	2.2	1.3	1.6	94.8
	Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Unpublished data

*Not employed includes all people who were unemployed or not in the labour force.

Underemployment and reduced hours

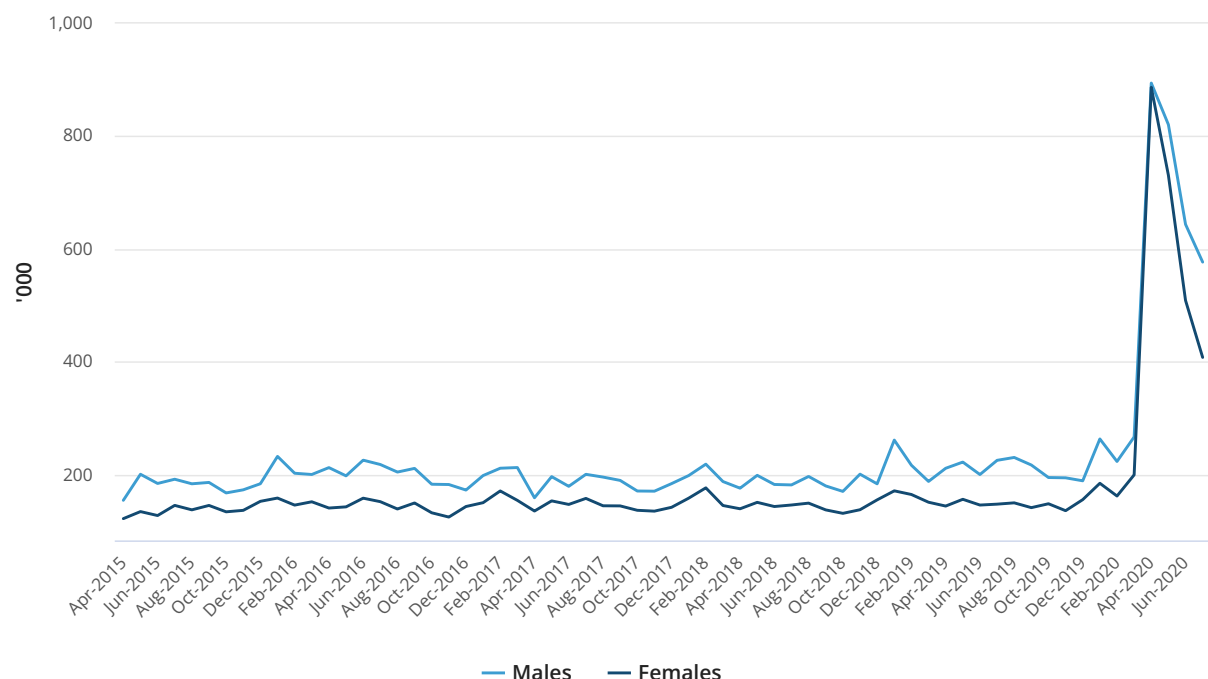
The number of underemployed people fell by 46,300 to 1,511,800 in July. As a result, the underemployment rate decreased by 0.5 pts to 11.2%. This followed a 0.7 pts decrease in May and a 1.4 pts decrease in June. Like in June, this net change in the number of underemployed people mainly reflected a decrease in the number of full-time employed who worked less than 35 hours in the reference week for economic reasons in July.

Chart 5 shows the number of men and women working fewer than their usual hours, or no hours at all. The number of men and women who worked fewer than their usual hours (or no hours at all) had a similar peak in April (at around 900,000 for both), however, the subsequent reductions have been much greater for women (a fall of around 500,000 since April, compared to just over 300,000 for men).

There were almost one million people who worked fewer than their usual hours for economic reasons in July 2020, a decrease of approximately 170,000 people since June (when it was around 1.15 million people), and almost 800,000 since April 2020 (when it was around 1.8 million people). This comprised:

- around 440,000 'underemployed full-time workers' (i.e. full-time who worked less than 35 hours in the reference week);
- almost 130,000 full-time workers who worked less than their usual hours in the reference week but still worked 35 hours or more; and
- almost 420,000 part-time workers.

Chart 5: Employed people working fewer than their usual hours, or no hours at all, Original



Source: Labour Force, Detailed, Data Cube EM2a

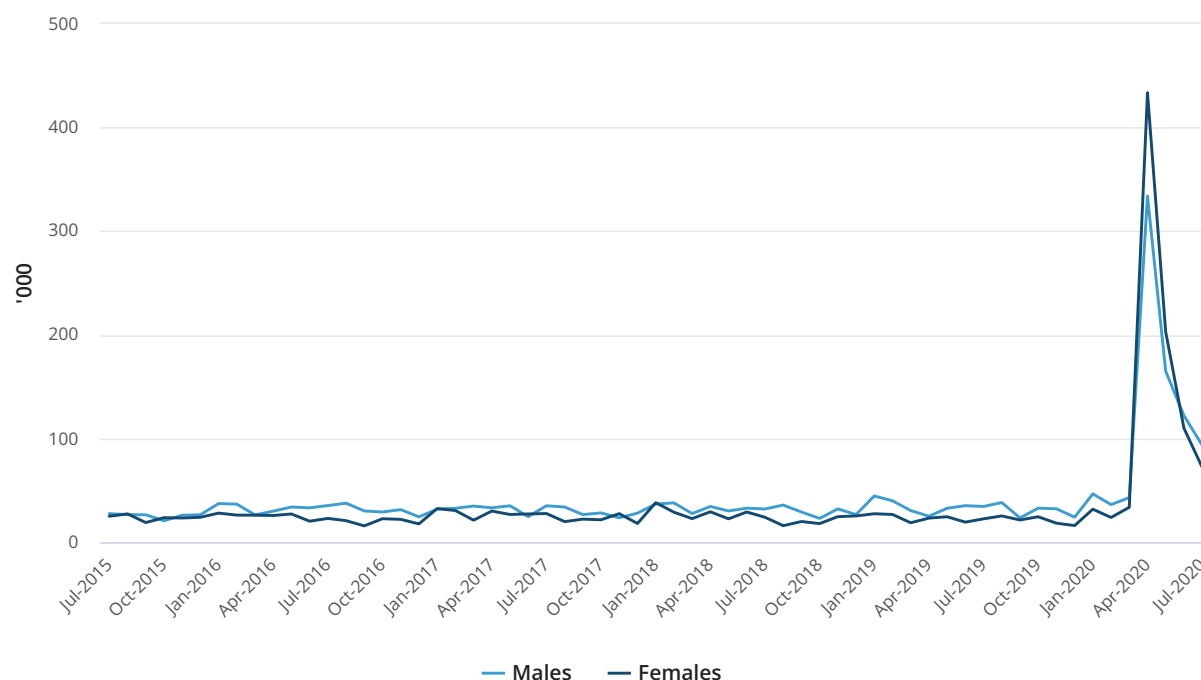
Of the almost one million employed people who worked less than their usual hours for economic reasons:

- around 165,000 did not work at all; and
- almost 820,000 worked some hours, but fewer hours than they usually work.

Chart 6 shows that the number of men and women working zero hours for economic reasons declined between June and July. Following the almost 700,000 increase between March and April, the number of people working zero hours for economic reasons has since

decreased by over 600,000 between April and July.

Chart 6: Employed people working zero hours, Males and Females, Original



Source: Labour Force, Detailed, Data Cube EM2a

Table 4 shows the number of people (and share of all employed) working zero hours for economic reasons in each state or territory. Like at the Australia level, all states and territories recorded very large increases in people working zero hours for economic reasons between March and April, followed by a steady decrease to July.

Table 4: People working zero hours for economic reasons, by State and territory, Original

	Mar-20		Apr-20		May-20		Jun-20		Jul-20	
	('000)	% of all Employed	('000)	% of all Employed	('000)	% of all Employed	('000)	% of all Employed	('000)	% of all Employed
NSW	30.9	0.7%	261.7	6.7%	121.2	3.1%	63.7	1.6%	41.6	1.0%
Victoria	22.8	0.7%	230.2	6.9%	102.9	3.2%	80.9	2.5%	65.7	2.0%

	Mar-20		Apr-20		May-20		Jun-20		Jul-20	
Queensland	12.0	0.5%	126.7	5.2%	64.9	2.8%	50.9	2.1%	28.3	1.2%
SA	4.5	0.5%	47.9	5.8%	23.5	2.9%	11.5	1.4%	9.5	1.1%
WA	4.8	0.4%	69.0	5.3%	41.8	3.3%	17.7	1.4%	15.4	1.2%
Tasmania	1.4	0.5%	16.8	6.7%	9.1	3.8%	4.5	1.8%	3.8	1.5%
NT	0.3	0.2%	5.0	3.8%	2.3	1.7%	1.3	1.0%	0.8	0.6%
ACT	0.0	0.0%	10.0	4.3%	2.2	0.9%	1.6	0.7%	0.8	0.3%
Australia	76.6	0.6%	767.4	6.2%	367.8	3.0%	232.1	1.9%	165.8	1.3%

Source: Labour Force, Detailed, Data Cube EM2b

For further information, email labour.statistics@abs.gov.au
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